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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 DHAKA 000090

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EEB/CBA DENNIS WINSTEAD  
NEW DELHI FOR FCS  
KOLKATA FOR FCS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: BEXP ETRD ECON PREL BG

SUBJECT: 2010 BFIF REQUEST FROM BANGLADESH

REF A: 09 STATE 126674 B: 09 STATE 25569 C: 09 DHAKA 80

SUMMARY

¶11. Mission Dhaka requests funding from the Business Facilitation Incentive Fund (BFIF) for training of economic-commercial staff and consultations with the Foreign Commercial Service (FCS) office in Kolkata. In the last three years, our commercial workload has increased dramatically, and our small Trade Center would greatly benefit from consultations and training at our regional FCS office. A visit and consultations with FCS-Kolkata under the State-Commerce Memorandum of Understanding for posts with no FCS office (ref B). A Mission Dhaka - FCS Kolkata partnership post arrangement would enable post to utilize the FCS fees it already collects for additional business promotion activities. Per Ref A request, we are including a second priority proposal for BFIF funding to print U.S. Trade Center publications.

BACKGROUND

¶12. Dhaka's small U.S. Trade Center has seen a sharp rise in demand for fee-based commercial services during the past three years. Fees for FCS-branded commercial services, including International Company Profiles, International Partnership Searches and Gold Key Services, rose from \$2,000 in FY07 to \$6,035 in FY08 and \$10,900 in FY09.

¶13. One year after the restoration of democracy in Bangladesh, the Government of Bangladesh (GOB) has articulated ambitious plans to promote trade and investment, particularly on energy and infrastructure projects. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressed the American Chamber of Commerce during her election campaign and signaled her keen interest in expanding trade and investment with the United States. Mission Dhaka looks forward to capitalizing on this interest in U.S. products and services in Bangladesh.

FIRST PRIORITY: TRAINING/CONSULTATION WITH FCS-KOLKATA

¶14. JUSTIFICATION/EXPECTED IMPACT: We are proposing to schedule a two-day commercial training for U.S. Trade Center staff with our partnership post in Kolkata, India. The visit would allow our U.S. direct-hire Economic/Commercial Officer and two Locally Engaged Staff (LES) to consult with FCS colleagues on service standards and best practices for provision of FCS-branded services to U.S. firms. A training program would also allow our staff to better understand and coordinate fee collection and administration of commercial services. This will ultimately enhance our services to U.S. firms pursuing trade and investment opportunities in Bangladesh.

¶15. Consultations with FCS-Kolkata would also offer an opportunity to engage with FCS colleagues in strategic planning for commercial outreach, promotion of U.S. trade shows and other business promotion

activities. By shadowing FCS commercial specialists and reviewing their standard operating procedures, we hope to improve the efficiency and service standards of the U.S. Trade Center in Dhaka. We will also consult with FCS on best practices in measuring the effectiveness of business promotion activities, in order to document success stories and focus on activities with the highest potential for increasing U.S. trade and investment. Per consultation with FCS and EEB/BCA, this training and consultation trip can lay the groundwork for Dhaka to be included as a partnership post under the State-Commerce MOU for non-FCS posts.

**¶6. Planning Milestones/Performance Metrics:** In consultation with FCS-Kolkata, we have tentatively scheduled the visit in late February or early March. Measurable outcomes include: the inclusion of Dhaka as a partnership post; increase in FCS-branded services; and, most importantly, an increase in documented success stories showing U.S. Trade Center contributions to increased U.S. exports.

**¶7. Cost Estimate:** A three-day training and consultation program in Kolkata for one American officer and two LES would cost approximately \$4,000, including lodging, M&IE, and air fare for three people.

SECOND PRIORITY: U.S. TRADE CENTER PUBLICATIONS

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**¶8. Enhanced Embassy security has limited physical access to the U.S. Trade Center and reduced its use by the public. Post proposes to use BFIF funds to extend our presence into Dhaka-area Chambers of Commerce and other business association offices through dissemination of Trade Center publications. Through BFIF, we would cover the printing costs of materials to supplement our outreach**

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efforts. Examples of these publications include: a brochure on Trade Center services, our Country Commercial Guide, answers to frequently asked questions, and tips for using the Internet to access USG information and services, including through buyusa.gov. Placing these resources into an "American Business Corner" in various Chambers of Commerce in Dhaka would extend the reach of our Trade Center and increase our ability to reach out to business here.

**¶9. Embassy officers now routinely carry our publications to meetings with government and business officials. Our publications and current distribution networks promote economic reform and U.S. exports, both key Mission objectives. Expanding access to these materials, and tailoring materials to clients' needs, would enable us to provide targeted and efficient responses to assistance requests. If the concept is proven, additional American Business Corners could be established in other major cities in Bangladesh, giving us a much wider 'virtual' presence.**

**¶10. Cost Estimate:** Costs of printing promotional materials and preparing small American Business Corner information kiosks for placement in local Chambers of Commerce would run approximately \$4,000.

**¶11. Points of contact for Economic/Commercial issues at Embassy Dhaka are:**

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